

Dear Ms. Hoffman-Floerke,

I am writing to comment on the Draft PEIR on Salton Sea Ecosystem Restoration. I am very interested in wildlife conservation and concerned about protecting wildlife habitat at the Salton Sea, which is an Important Bird Area and a national treasure. Over 400 bird species rely on the Salton Sea ecosystem, and public health depends on preventing dangerous dust pollution caused by a dry seabed. Restoration should provide the maximum feasible wildlife habitat, air, and water quality protection, as required by law.

Although the Draft EIR contains a wide range of restoration alternatives, none of the alternatives provides the maximum feasible wildlife, air, and water quality protection. By taking features from different alternatives, however, the State of California could present a final, preferred alternative that meets these requirements and protects this unique and important resource.

The preferred alternative should include the following features from different draft alternatives:

1. At least 38,000 to 50,000 acres of Shallow Saline Habitat Complex, as described in draft Alternatives 1 and 2;
2. Concentric lakes using geotubes or other dirt-filled barriers, as described in draft Alternative 4, to provide additional habitat and recreational opportunities;
3. A large north lake, fed by the Whitewater River, as described in draft Alternatives 5-7, to provide recreational opportunities without the habitat and other risks posed by a deep, mid-Sea barrier and pumping from the New and Alamo Rivers;
4. Sufficient water for air quality mitigation, including at least one-half acre-foot per year of water for each acre of exposed seabed, as described in draft Alternatives 1-3, 5-6 and 8;
5. Several thousand acres of Early Start Habitat to replace habitat during permitting and construction;
6. The flexibility of Alternatives 1, 2 and 4 to allow for phasing, monitoring and adaptive management.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.